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Women and men who experienced cyberstalking in Canada

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Overview of the study

Using data from the 2014 General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), this study examines the prevalence of cyberstalking among women and men aged 15 and over living in the 10 Canadian provinces. This study also examines several factors associated with experiences of cyberstalking—specifically, self-rated mental health and satisfaction with personal safety from crime.

- In 2014, approximately 2.5 million people in Canada (representing 7% of Internet users aged 15 and over) experienced cyberstalking in the previous five years. Women were more likely to report having been cyberstalked (8%) than men (less than 6%).
- The prevalence of cyberstalking was higher among younger women and men. For instance, 14% of women aged 15 to 24 were cyberstalked compared with 7% of women aged 45 to 54. Similarly, 9% of men aged 15 to 24 reported being cyberstalked compared with 4% of men aged 45 to 54.
- Women who were victimized or witnessed violence in their youth were more likely to report that they experienced cyberstalking. For example, 15% of women who witnessed violence involving at least one parent before age 15 were cyberstalked, compared with 7% among those who did not.
- Women who were cyberstalked had a lower probability than those who were not cyberstalked to report that their mental health was "very good" or "excellent" (67% versus 74%). They were also less likely to be "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with personal safety from crime (80% versus 86%).
- Men who were cyberstalked also had a lower probability to report that their mental health was "very good" or "excellent" (70% versus 75%). Personal safety indicators, however, did not differ between men who were cyberstalked and those who were not.

Introduction

Internet use is nearly universal in Canada—with about 90% of the population being online at least a few times a month in 2016.[1] Widespread Internet use has significantly altered how we communicate with each other by introducing innovative ways of accessing information and socializing. Technological advances have also increased Internet accessibility, allowing for immediate Internet use through wireless handheld devices such as cell phones or tablets. Many Canadians own multiple devices through which they can access the Internet. In 2016, among Canadians aged 15 and over, 76% owned a smartphone, 71% had a laptop or netbook, 54% owned a tablet or e-reader, and 50% had a desktop computer.[2] This ever-present and immediate access to the Internet—and consequently to other people via the Internet—may be viewed as positive in many respects (e.g., connecting or reconnecting with friends or family, online shopping), but it may also lead to online victimization, as perpetrators have new, and potentially anonymous, ways of harassing or threatening others.

Past research has shown that there are multiple risk factors associated with online victimization (i.e., cyberbullying and cyberstalking). For example, people who use the Internet more frequently are more likely to report having been victimized online than those who use the Internet less frequently.[3] Previous research has also shown that women

are at greater risk of cyberstalking than men.[4] That said, little is known about whether the risk factors for cyberstalking or the impact of being cyberstalked differ between women and men.

This article will examine whether the factors associated with cyberstalking differ between women and men.[5] Empirical evidence on the emotional impact of cyberstalking (e.g., mental health and well-being) is limited, whereas research on the impact of traditional, offline stalking is more readily available. Recognizing that cyberstalking and offline stalking are closely related phenomena,[6] previous research has suggested that women may be more adversely affected by experiencing offline stalking than men.[7] As such, the relationship between experiencing cyberstalking, self-rated mental health and satisfaction with personal safety from crime will also be examined for women and men.

This study uses the 2014 General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) to examine the prevalence of cyberstalking experiences among women and men aged 15 and over in the 10 Canadian provinces. Only those who indicated using the Internet at least once in the previous five years were included in this study.[8]

Women are more likely than men to report that they experienced cyberstalking

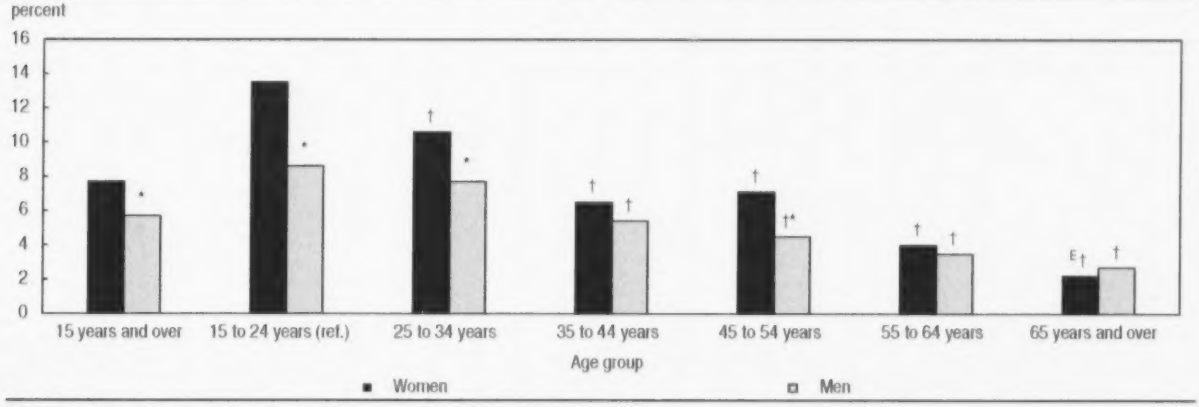
Cyberstalking is a relatively new area of research with no universally accepted definition or consensus among researchers about what constitutes cyberstalking.[9] In this study, cyberstalking is defined using individuals' responses to two questions that appeared within a larger suite of questions about stalking. As was the case with all stalking questions, the two cyberstalking questions were prefaced with "In the past 5 years, have you been the subject of repeated and unwanted attention that caused you to fear for your safety or the safety of someone known to you? By that I mean..."

(1) has anyone sent you unwanted messages through e-mail, text, Facebook or any other social media?

(2) has anyone posted inappropriate, unwanted or personal information about you or pictures on a social media site?

Unlike other forms of online victimization (e.g., cyberbullying[10]), cyberstalking is distinct in that the respondent reported feelings of fear. The sample included all respondents who self-reported[11] being cyberstalked using at least one of the measures described above, both of which acknowledged fear for their safety or the safety of someone known to them.[12] Given that fear is central to the experience of cyberstalking, it is important to recognize that gender differences in

Chart 1
Percentage of women and men aged 15 and over who were cyberstalked in the past five years,[1] by age, 2014



E use with caution
* significantly different from women at $p < 0.05$
† significantly different from reference category (ref.) ($p < 0.05$)
1. Includes only those who indicated that they had used the Internet at least once during the past five years.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), 2014.

fear may play a role in the likelihood of self-reporting cyberstalking. Previous research has suggested that men are more likely than women to downplay or not disclose their fear of crime.[13]

In 2014, approximately 2.5 million women and men in Canada (representing 7% of the population aged 15 and over) reported having experienced cyberstalking in the previous five years. Among them, women were more likely than men to report having been cyberstalked (8% versus 6%, respectively).

Younger women and men were particularly at risk of having been cyberstalked in the previous five years (Chart 1). For instance, 14% of women aged 15 to 24 were cyberstalked compared with 7% of women aged 45 to 54. Similarly, 9% of men aged 15 to 24 reported being cyberstalked compared with less than 5% among men aged 45 to 54. In addition, young women aged 15 to 24 and 25 to 34 were more likely than same-aged young men to have been cyberstalked. This gender difference was also observed among those aged 45 to 54.

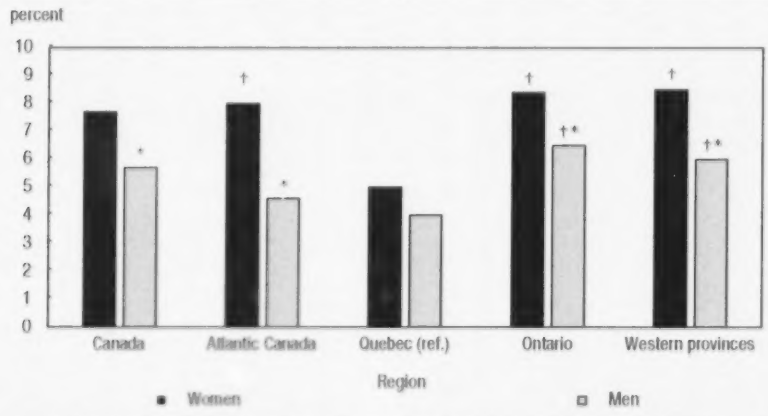
The prevalence of cyberstalking also varied by region. Among women, the prevalence of cyberstalking was significantly lower in Quebec (5%) than it was in Atlantic Canada[14] (8%), Ontario (8%) and the western provinces[15] (9%) (Chart 2). Among men, the prevalence of cyberstalking was similar in Quebec (4%) and Atlantic Canada (5%), but cyberstalking prevalence in Quebec was significantly lower than in Ontario (7%) and the western provinces (6%).[16]

Among women aged 15 and over, those who were married[17] were less likely to be cyberstalked than women in any other relationship situation (Chart 3). Women who were in a common-law relationship were more likely than married women to have been cyberstalked (7% versus 4%); the difference between men in a common-law relationship and married men was not significant (4% versus 3%). Women and men who were single (never-married) and those who were separated or divorced were particularly more likely to report that they had experienced cyberstalking.

In terms of gender differences, married women were slightly more likely than married men to have experienced cyberstalking in the previous five years (4% versus 3%). The difference was greatest among those who were single (never-married) (13% versus 9%), whereas separated or divorced women and men were similarly likely to have been cyberstalked in the previous five years (12% and 13%).

Among those were separated or divorced, female victims of cyberstalking were nearly 2.5 times more likely to report having been physically or sexually abused by an ex-spouse in the previous five years than their counterparts who had not experienced cyberstalking (29% versus 12%). A similar finding was observed among separated or divorced men, albeit to a lesser extent (26% versus 14%).

Chart 2
Percentage of women and men aged 15 and over who were cyberstalked in the past five years,[1] by region, 2014



* significantly different from women at $p < 0.05$
† significantly different from reference category (ref.) ($p < 0.05$)
1. Includes only those who indicated that they had used the Internet at least once during the past five years.
Notes: Atlantic Canada includes Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. The western provinces include Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), 2014.

The prevalence of cyberstalking is higher among women who were victimized in their youth

Research has demonstrated a strong link between childhood victimization (i.e., witnessing and/or experiencing abuse during childhood) and an increased risk of victimization in adulthood.[18] In line with such research, the prevalence

of cyberstalking among women and men aged 15 and over was significantly higher for those who had experienced childhood physical and/or sexual abuse[19] and for those who, as a child, had witnessed violence involving at least one parent.[20]

Specifically, among those who had experienced childhood physical and/or sexual abuse before the age of 15, women were nearly 1.5 times more likely than men to have been cyberstalked (14% versus 9%, respectively) (Chart 4). Women were also more likely than men to have experienced cyberstalking if they had witnessed violence involving at least one parent before the age of 15 (15% versus 11%).

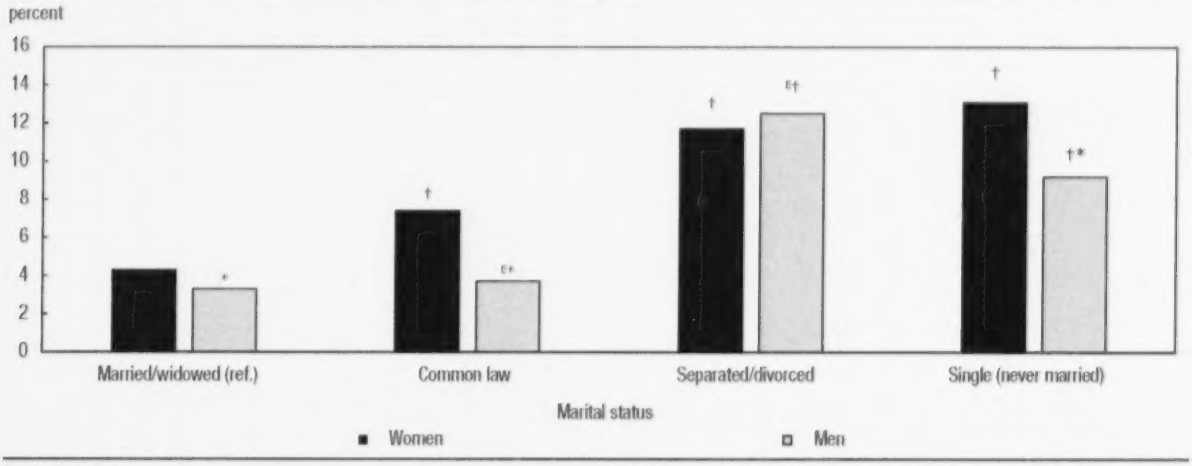
In addition, the gap with respect to cyberstalking between those who were victimized in the past and those who were not was greater for women than it was for men. For instance, among women who had experienced physical and/or sexual assault before the age of 15, 14% had experienced cyberstalking versus 5% who had not (a difference of 8 percentage points). Among men who had experienced this type of abuse, 9% had experienced cyberstalking versus 4% among those who had not (a difference of 5 percentage points).

Past experience with violence or discrimination remained associated with cyberstalking, even after accounting for other factors

This section assesses the impact of each factor associated with having experienced cyberstalking in the past five years among women and men aged 18 and over.[21] Separate logistic regressions were estimated for women and men to assess the relationship between cyberstalking and selected characteristics, including demographic, socioeconomic, and ethnocultural characteristics; as well as past experience with violence or discrimination. Regression models were created to examine the significance of each characteristic while taking all other factors into account. The results from these models are presented as predicted probabilities where 1 should be interpreted as a 100% chance of having experienced cyberstalking and 0 as a 0% chance of having experienced cyberstalking.

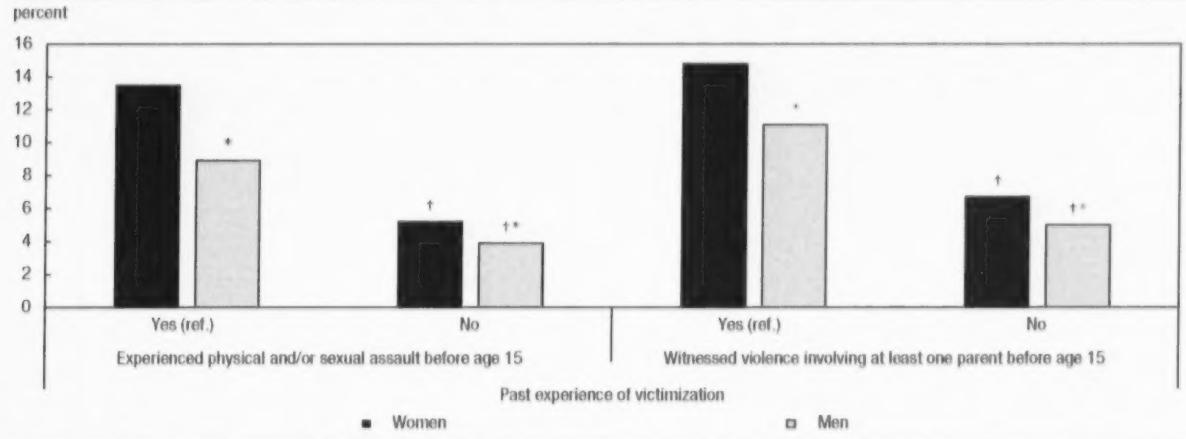
Among both women and men, the results indicate that, after controlling for other key factors of interest, there is a relationship between having experienced cyberstalking and a number of factors including age, marital status, household income, parental education, and past experience with violence or discrimination.

Chart 3
Percentage of women and men aged 15 and over who were cyberstalked in the past five years,[1] by marital status, 2014



† use with caution
* significantly different from women at $p < 0.05$
† significantly different from reference category (ref.) ($p < 0.05$)
1. Includes only those who indicated that they had used the Internet at least once during the past five years.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), 2014.

Chart 4
Percentage of women and men aged 15 and over who were cyberstalked in the past five years,[1] by past experience of assault or witnessing violence involving at least one parent, 2014



* significantly different from women at $p < 0.05$
† significantly different from reference category (ref.) ($p < 0.05$)
1. Includes only those who indicated that they had used the Internet at least once during the past five years.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), 2014.

Demographic characteristics—age, region and marital status—remained significantly associated with cyberstalking after controlling for other factors (Table 1). Similarly, the associations between marital status and cyberstalking described earlier also remained even after controlling for other factors.

Cyberstalking did not vary across educational attainment levels for women and men. Parental education, however, was related to cyberstalking experiences. Women whose parents did not have a university degree had a lower probability of experiencing cyberstalking compared with women whose parents both had a university degree (7% versus 10%). A similar finding was observed among men (5% versus 7%).[22]

Previous research has demonstrated a relationship between household income and online victimization. Specifically, people in lower income households are more likely to report having been victimized online.[23] Among women, before-tax household income was found to be associated with having experienced cyberstalking. Compared with women who reported less than $40,000, women who reported $40,000 to less than $80,000 had a lower probability of being cyberstalked (7% versus 11%), as did those who reported $80,000 or more (7% versus 11%). In contrast, household income was not a significant predictor of having experienced cyberstalking among men.

The results of the model also confirmed the association between past experiences with violence and cyberstalking. For instance, the probability of being cyberstalked was significantly higher among women who had experienced both physical and sexual abuse before age 15 (15%) and also among those who experienced either one of these forms of abuse (10%), compared with women who did not report being abused as a child (6%). A similar relationship was observed for men. In addition, having witnessed violence involving at least one parent before the age of 15 was also associated with experiencing cyberstalking among both women (10%, compared with 7% for those who did not experience it) and men (8% versus 5%). Such results are in line with previous research showing that children who witness violence are more likely to experience it themselves in childhood and in adulthood.[24]

The probability of experiencing cyberstalking was also significantly higher among those who had experienced discrimination in the past five years. Among women, those who had such experiences had a higher probability of experiencing cyberstalking (13%) than those who did not experience it (6%). The difference was also significant for men (10% versus 4%).

Table 1
Predicted probability of having experienced cyberstalking in the past five years among women and men aged 18 and over,[1] by selected characteristics, 2014

	Women	Men
	predicted probability	
Age group		
18 to 24 (ref.)	0.11	0.07
25 to 34	0.10	0.07
35 to 44	0.07*	0.06
45 to 54	0.07*	0.04
55 to 64	0.04*	0.03*
65 and over	0.03*	0.04*
Region		
Atlantic	0.08	0.05
Quebec	0.05*	0.04*
Ontario (ref.)	0.08	0.06
West	0.08	0.06
Marital Status		
Married[2] (ref.)	0.06	0.04
Common-law	0.08*	0.03
Separated/divorced	0.11*	0.11*
Single (never-married)	0.09*	0.08*
Education		
High school diploma or less (ref.)	0.07	0.05
Postsecondary education below the bachelor's level	0.07	0.06
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.08	0.06
Parents' education		
Both have a university degree (ref.)	0.10	0.07
At least one has a university degree	0.09	0.06
Neither has a university degree	0.07*	0.05*
Do not know either parent's education level	0.04*	0.05
Household income (before tax)		
Less than $40,000 (ref.)	0.11	0.04
$40,000 to $79,999	0.07*	0.06
$80,000 or more	0.07*	0.05
Not stated	0.08*	0.06
Aboriginal identity		
Aboriginal (ref.)	0.09	0.06
Non-Aboriginal	0.07	0.05
Respondent's birthplace[3]		
Born in Canada (ref.)	0.08	0.05
Born outside Canada	0.07	0.06
Visible minority status		
Visible minority (ref.)	0.06	0.04
Not a visible minority	0.08*	0.06*
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual (ref.)	0.08	0.05
Homosexual/bisexual	0.07	0.07
Experience of abuse before age 15		
Experienced physical abuse or sexual abuse	0.10*	0.07*
Experienced both physical and sexual abuse	0.15*	0.14*
None (ref.)	0.06	0.04
Witnessed violence involving at least one parent before age 15		
Yes	0.10*	0.08*
No (ref.)	0.07	0.05
Experienced discrimination in the past five years		
Yes	0.13*	0.10*
No (ref.)	0.06	0.04

* significantly different from reference category (ref.), within sex, at $p < 0.05$
1. Includes only those who indicated that they had used the Internet at least once during the past five years.
2. The category "married" also includes a small number of people who indicated that they were widowed.
3. Due to differences in the coding of General Social Survey data, "Born in Canada" may include a small proportion of immigrants, such as the children of foreign diplomats. It also may exclude a small proportion of Canadian citizens by birth who were born outside Canada.
Note: Women and men aged 15 to 17 are not included.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), 2014.

The probability of experiencing cyberstalking did not vary by sexual orientation, place of birth or Aboriginal identity. At the bivariate level, these variables were all related to a higher probability of experiencing cyberstalking, particularly among women.[25] Aboriginal women, for instance, were more likely to be cyberstalked than non-Aboriginal women (15% versus 7%); no significant difference was found between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men. Similarly, over 15% of women who were homosexual or bi-sexual reported that they were cyberstalked, compared with 7% among women who were heterosexual (similar results were found for men). The proportion was also higher for women born in Canada than it was for those born outside the country (no such relationship was found for men). These differences, however, are no longer significant in the model with the inclusion of past experience with violence or discrimination, and the witnessing of parental violence variables.[26]

There is a relationship between having been cyberstalked and self-rated mental health, and satisfaction with personal safety from crime

Many studies point to the negative impact of cyberstalking on mental health and well-being, and acknowledge that the stalking does not have to be physical (or offline) to cause harm.[27] Some may find the experience of cyberstalking particularly distressing, given their constant accessibility via cell phone, email and social media. Furthermore, previous research has suggested that in cases where cyberstalking involves social media (e.g., Facebook and Twitter), the unwanted messages or inappropriate information may be immediately visible to one's family and friends, thus simultaneously harming one's psychological well-being and reputation.

The relationship between cyberstalking, self-rated mental health and self-rated satisfaction of personal safety from crime is examined in this section. The General Social Survey does not allow for causal relationships to be established—it provides an association between these variables. The results are based on separate models[28] for each mental health and satisfaction-of-personal-safety-from-crime indicator as a dependent variable, and include experience with cyberstalking in the past five years as one of the explanatory variables.

Results indicate that women who had been cyberstalked within the previous five years had a 67% probability of reporting "very good" or "excellent" mental health, compared with 74% for their counterparts who had not experienced cyberstalking (Table 2). This was also the case for men. Men who had been cyberstalked in the previous five years had a lower probability of reporting their mental health as "very good" or "excellent" compared with those who had not been cyberstalked (70% versus 75%).

Among women, a relationship existed between experiencing cyberstalking and satisfaction with personal safety from crime. Women who had been cyberstalked in the previous five years had a lower probability of rating their satisfaction with personal safety from crime as "satisfied" or "very satisfied" (80%), compared with those who had not been cyberstalked (86%). No such relationship was observed for men.

Table 2
Indicators of self-rated mental health and satisfaction with personal safety from crime, women and men aged 18 and over, by cyberstalking experience in the past five years,[1] 2014

	Indicator			
	Self-rated mental health is "very good" or "excellent"	Self-rated satisfaction with personal safety from crime is "satisfied" or "very satisfied"	"Not at all worried" about safety from crime when home alone in the evening or at night[2]	"Not at all worried" about safety from crime when walking home alone in the evening or at night[3]
	predicted probability			
Men				
Who were cyberstalked	0.70 *	0.90	0.94	0.93
Who were not cyberstalked (ref.)	0.75	0.92	0.95	0.94
Women				
Who were cyberstalked	0.67 *	0.80 *	0.77 *	0.66
Who were not cyberstalked (ref.)	0.74	0.86	0.83	0.70

* significantly different from reference category (ref.), within sex, at $p < 0.05$
1. Includes only those who indicated that they had used the Internet at least once during the past five years.
2. Excludes people who indicated that they are never home alone.
3. Excludes people who indicated that they never walk alone.
Note: Predicted probabilities are modelled in separate logistic regressions with each indicator as a single outcome and experience with cyberstalking in the past five years as a predictor. Control variables in these analyses are age, region, marital status, highest certificate, diploma or degree of respondent, parents' education, household income, Aboriginal identity, birthplace, visible minority status, sexual orientation, experienced physical/sexual abuse before age 15, experienced discrimination in past five years, and witnessed violence involving at least one parent before age 15.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), 2014.

Similarly, the probability of a woman stating that she was "not at all worried" about her personal safety from crime when home alone in the evening or at night was lower for those who had experienced cyberstalking in the previous five years (77%) than for those who had not experienced cyberstalking (83%). This relationship was not observed among men.

Conclusion

This study confirms previous findings that the prevalence of cyberstalking is higher among women than men. Although the risk factors associated with cyberstalking were similar between women and men, there was one notable exception—household income. Specifically, women who reported lower household income had a higher probability of being cyberstalked than their counterparts with a higher income. This association was not observed among men.

In addition, for both women and men, past experiences with violence are significant factors associated with having experienced cyberstalking in the previous five years. All else being equal, a higher probability of being cyberstalked was observed among those who had experienced childhood physical and/or sexual abuse, as well as among those who had witnessed violence involving at least one parent in their childhood, than among those who had not had such experiences.

Although experiencing cyberstalking was related to poorer self-reported mental health for both women and men, women who were cyberstalked were less satisfied with their personal safety from crime. This study's findings draw attention to gender differences in cyberstalking across Canada, adding to the conversation currently under way in Canada on gender-based violence.

Amanda Burlock *is an analyst with the Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division at Statistics Canada, and* ***Tamara Hudon*** *is now a senior research and evaluation advisor with Research, Evaluation and Planning at Status of Women Canada.*
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Data sources, methods and definitions

Data sources

This study uses data from the 2014 General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization). The target population consisted of the non-institutionalized Canadian population aged 15 and over, living in the 10 Canadian provinces (excluding the territories). The data were collected throughout the 2014 calendar year. Responding to the survey is voluntary and the data are collected directly from the survey respondents (self-declared). The 2014 Victimization Survey had a final sample size of 33,127 and a 52.9% response rate. Self-reported data are different from police-reported data because not all incidents are necessarily reported to police.

Methods

Only women and men who indicated that they had used the Internet at least once during the past five years were included in this study. All estimates in this study take the survey design into account, including a bootstrapping technique that was applied to calculate all estimates of variance. For this study, separate logistic regression models were conducted for women and men and their results were presented as predicted probabilities. Unless otherwise stated, "don't know," "refusal" and "not stated" responses were excluded from the denominators used when calculating proportions.

Estimates with coefficients of variation equal to or greater than 16.6% and less than 33.3% should be interpreted with caution; these are noted [E] in the tables and charts. Estimates with coefficients of variation greater than or equal to 33.3% were suppressed.

Readers should note that the data used in this study are cross-sectional and the analyses presented are correlational. Causal relationships cannot be inferred.

Definitions

The sample in this study was restricted to those who had indicated that they used the Internet at least once during the past five years. Two measures were used to determine whether a respondent had experienced cyberstalking in the past five years and are part of a larger suite of stalking variables. These two measures and the percentage of "yes" responses are shown in Table 3, by sex.

Table 3
Percentage of women and men aged 15 and over who answered "yes" to the cyberstalking questions, 2014

	Women	Men
	percent	
In the past 5 years, have you been the subject of repeated and unwanted attention that caused you to fear for your safety or the safety of someone known to you? By that I mean...		
Stalking (communication): In the past 5 years, have you been the subject of repeated and unwanted attention that caused you to fear for your safety or the safety of someone known by you? By that I mean has anyone sent you unwanted messages through e-mail, text, Facebook or any other social media?	7.0	4.8
Stalking (threat): In the past 5 years, have you been the subject of repeated and unwanted attention that caused you to fear for your safety or the safety of someone known by you? By that I mean has anyone posted inappropriate, unwanted or personal information about you or pictures on a social media site?	1.3	1.5

Notes: Only those who indicated that they had used the Internet at least once during the past five years were included in the sample.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), 2014.

Supplementary information

Table A1
Percentage of women and men aged 18 and over who were cyberstalked in the past five years,[1] by selected characteristics, 2014

	Women	Men
	percent	
Age group		
18 to 24 (ref.)	14.4	8.2 *
25 to 34	10.6 †	7.8 *
35 to 44	6.4 †	5.1 †
45 to 54	7.1 †	4.5 †*
55 to 64	3.9 †	3.3 †
65 and over	2.1 ††	2.6 ††
Region		
Atlantic	7.3	4.4 †*
Quebec	5.0 †	4.1 †
Ontario (ref.)	8.1	6.1 *
West	8.6	5.7 *
Marital Status		
Married[2] (ref.)	4.3	3.3 *
Common-law	7.4 †	3.5 †*
Separated/divorced	11.4 †	12.3 ††
Single (never-married)	13.6 †	9.1 †*
Education		
High school diploma or less (ref.)	8.3	5.2 *
Postsecondary education below the bachelor's level	6.7 †	5.5
Bachelor's degree or higher	7.6	5.5 *
Parents' education		
Both have a university degree (ref.)	12.3	8.8
At least one has a university degree	10.0	6.3 *
Neither has a university degree	6.7 †	4.8 †*
Do not know either parent's education level	3.0 ††	3.9 ††
Household income (before tax)		
Less than $40,000 (ref.)	10.8	5.2 *
$40,000 to $79,999	5.7 †	5.1
$80,000 or more	6.0 †	4.2 *
Not stated	9.7	7.2 †*
Aboriginal identity		
Aboriginal (ref.)	15.2	7.3 †*
Non-Aboriginal	7.3 †	5.3 *
Respondent's birthplace[3]		
Born in Canada (ref.)	7.8	5.4 *
Born outside Canada	6.3 †	5.4
Visible minority status		
Visible minority (ref.)	7.4	5.1
Not a visible minority	7.5	5.5 *
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual (ref.)	7.3	5.2 †*
Homosexual/bisexual	15.2 †	12.7 ††

Table A1
Percentage of women and men aged 18 and over who were cyberstalked in the past five years,[1] by selected characteristics, 2014

	Women	Men
	percent	
Experience of abuse before age 15		
Experienced physical abuse or sexual abuse	11.5 [†]	7.7 [†*]
Experienced both physical and sexual abuse	17.7 [†]	16.2 [†*]
None (ref.)	5.1	3.8 [*]
Witnessed violence involving at least one parent before age 15		
Yes	15.0 [†]	11.1 [†*]
No (ref.)	6.5	4.7 [*]
Experienced discrimination in the past five years		
Yes	18.3 [†]	14.3 [†*]
No (ref.)	5.5	4.1 [*]

[†] use with caution
[*] significantly different from women at $p < 0.05$
[‡] significantly different from reference category (ref.), within sex, at $p < 0.05$
1. Includes only those who indicated that they had used the Internet at least once during the past five years.
2. The category "married" also includes a small number of people who indicated that they were widowed.
3. Due to differences in the coding of General Social Survey data, "Born in Canada" may include a small proportion of immigrants, such as the children of foreign diplomats. It also may exclude a small proportion of Canadian citizens by birth who were born outside Canada.
Note: For comparability with the adjusted model in Table 1, data in this table represent the subset of cases with valid responses for each of the select characteristics.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), 2014.

Notes

1. See Statistics Canada (2017).
2. Ibid.
3. See Spitzberg and Hoobler (2002); Hango (2016).
4. See Dreßing et al. (2014); Hango (2016).
5. Readers should note that some people do not fit into this binary concept of gender.
6. For the purposes of this study, cyberstalking is considered an extension of traditional, offline stalking via the Internet due to the fact that cyberstalking questions were asked alongside stalking questions not specific to online victimization. There is no consensus among researchers whether cyberstalking should be considered an extension of offline stalking in a new domain (i.e., via the Internet) or whether cyberstalking is a separate phenomenon, distinct from offline stalking. For more information, see Sheridan and Grant (2007).
7. See Pathé and Mullen (1997); Blaauw et al. (2002); Davis et al. (2002); Sheridan and Lyndon (2012).
8. Internet use was widespread across all population groups, except in older age groups. Among those aged 15 to 49, Internet use in the last 5 years was nearly universal (over 95%). It was over 85% for those aged 50 to 59, and at least 60% among those aged 60 to 74. Cyberstalking and cyberbullying, however, is relatively low in older age groups (as shown in Hango, 2016).
9. See Parsons-Pollard and Moriarty (2009); Nobles et al. (2014); Dreßing et al. (2014); Short et al. (2015).
10. Generally speaking, cyberbullying refers to electronic messages that intimidate, embarrass or threaten the recipient. The concepts of cyberstalking and cyberbullying are relatively similar according to the General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization). The key differences in these concepts, unlike cyberstalking, are that victims of cyberbullying are not necessarily "the subject of repeated and unwanted attention" and may or may not be afraid for their safety or the safety of someone known to them.
11. Instances of cyberstalking are self-reported, therefore, they may or may not have come to the attention of the police.
12. This study uses broad inclusion criteria for cyberstalking, meaning that the sample was not restricted further by the follow-up question, "Did you fear for your safety or the safety of someone known to you?" This narrow inclusion criterion is used when measuring the Canadian *Criminal Code* definition of stalking or criminal harassment. Using the Canadian *Criminal Code* definition, the prevalence of cyberstalking among women and men aged 15 and over reduces to 3% versus 1%, respectively.
13. See Sutton et al. (2011).
14. Atlantic Canada includes Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador.
15. The western provinces include Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.
16. The lower prevalence of being cyberstalked in Quebec could be explained, in part, by differences in the translation and interpretation of the cyberstalking questions in the French and English versions of the questionnaire.
17. Throughout this study, "married" also includes a small number of people who indicated that they were widowed.
18. See Desai et al. (2002); Reid and Sullivan (2009); Parks et al. (2011); Perreault (2015); Hango (2016); Burczycka and Conroy (2017); Hango (2017).
19. This includes respondents who reported that, before the age of 15, they had experienced physical and/or sexual abuse by an adult. Excludes respondents who stated "Don't know" or "Refusal."
20. This includes respondents who reported that, before the age of 15, they had seen or heard at least one instance of a parent, step-parent or guardian hitting another adult. Excludes respondents who stated "Don't know" or "Refusal."
21. Unlike the previous section, which discussed the population aged 15 and over, the remainder of the study will examine women and men aged 18 and over. This decision was made to further examine cyberstalking and sexual orientation, given the high incidence of cyberstalking among homosexual and bisexual women and men. The question on sexual orientation was only asked of those aged 18 and over.

22. Parental education possibly acts as a proxy for social class background, which would contribute to a sense of agency (defined as mastery, efficacy or personal control) in later life outcomes (see Hitlin and Johnson, 2015). A sense of agency would suggest that respondents who had at least one parent with a university education are more inclined to report that they have been cyberstalked because they are more cognizant about victimization and its implications. This hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that respondents in the GSS who had at least one university-educated parent are also more likely to report other types of victimization, such as being discriminated in the past 5 years or being the victim of a violent assault in the past year. As was the case with cyberstalking, the relationship appears to be stronger for women than for men.
23. See Perreault (2011); Hango (2016).
24. See Burczycka and Conroy (2017); and Hango (2017).
25. See Table A1 for a complete list of all bivariate relationships between explanatory variables and the proportion of women and men aged 18 and over who had been cyberstalked in the previous five years.
26. Given the importance of past experiences of violence in childhood and recent discrimination on the probability of being cyberstalked, a series of alternate models were estimated with these three measures removed. Similar to past research (Hango 2016), when the three victimization measures are removed from the model, both sexual orientation and Aboriginal identity are significantly associated with cyberstalking. The findings from these alternative analyses suggest that past victimization and recent discrimination help explain some of the relationship between sexual orientation and cyberstalking and between Aboriginal identity and cyberstalking. Moreover, in an additional model, frequency of internet use was included as a covariate, but it did not have any impact on the likelihood of being cyberstalked, nor did it have an impact on any of the other covariates.
27. See Spitzberg and Hoobler (2002); Sheridan and Grant (2007); Parsons-Pollard and Moriarty (2009); Dreßing et al. (2014); Short et al. (2015); Hango (2016); Worsley et al. (2017).
28. Control variables in Table 2 include: age; region; marital status; highest certificate, diploma or degree of respondent; parents' education; household income; Aboriginal identity; birthplace; visible minority status; sexual orientation; experienced physical or sexual abuse before age 15; experienced discrimination in past five years; and witnessed violence involving at least one parent before age 15.

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